



Public Notice

US Army Corps
of Engineers

Sacramento District
1325 J Street
Sacramento, CA 95814-2922

Public Notice Number: 200175177

Date: June 5, 2001

Comments Due: July 5, 2001

In reply, please refer to the Public Notice Number

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

SUBJECT: Application for a Department of the Army permit under authority of Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (CWA) and for water quality certification under Section 401 of the CWA to discharge dredged and fill material in wetlands adjacent to Tomichi Creek and the Gunnison River, as shown in the attached drawings.

APPLICANT: Mr. Rex Tippetts
Gunnison County Airport Manager
711 West Rio Grande
Gunnison, Colorado 81230

LOCATION: The proposed project site is located near Tomichi Creek and the Gunnison River within Sections 1 and 2, Township 49 North, Range 1 West, Gunnison County, Colorado.

PURPOSE: To upgrade the Gunnison County Airport to meet Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) safety and design criteria.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: The applicant proposes to excavate and discharge approximately 289,000 cubic yards of dredged and fill in approximately 19.6 acres of wetland. Schedule I of the proposed project involves the relocation of Gold Basin Road and the west end of Runway 6/24 outside the Runway Object Free Area. Construction activities will include removal of the existing road bed and asphalt, earthwork, placement of base material, asphalt paving, drainage improvements, construction of a new bike path, fence relocation, new pavement marking and traffic signage. Schedule II of the proposed project includes improvements to the Runway Safety Area to meet FAA standards including additional pavement removal, earthwork and drainage improvements. Wetlands between the south edge of the existing runway safety area and dike/road will be graded and fill to meet standards. Grading at the end of Runway 6/24 will also be performed to accommodate a 500-foot runway shift and connector taxiway.

ALTERNATIVES: Alternatives have been developed and analyzed as to feasibility and environmental impact. In order for existing and projected aircraft to continue to operate in a safe and efficient manner, and to accommodate required load factors, existing runway length must be maintained. Therefore, any alternatives involving the shorting of runway length were rejected.

In addition to alternatives that would achieve runway safety area criteria, several alternatives including another new runway and a new airport were considered. These alternatives were determined not to be practicable due to economical and environmental cost.

A complete discussion of project and mitigation alternatives is included in the Gunnison County Airport Environmental Assessment, prepared by Barnard Dunkleberg and Company (BDC). A copy of the assessment can be obtained by contacting DBC at the Cherry Street Building, 1616 East 15th Street, Tulsa, Oklahoma 74120.

AREA DESCRIPTION: The project site is located at the southern portion of the City of Gunnison, Colorado in the Gunnison River Valley at an elevation of approximately 7,668 feet msl. The Gunnison Valley is surrounded by mountains and Tomichi Creek flows in a generally east/west direction south of the airport. Wetlands that would be impacted along the valley floor are classified as palustrine, emergent sedge/rush and palustrine aquatic bed.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

The applicant has requested water quality certification from the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, Water Quality Control Division in accordance with Section 401 of the Clean Water Act. Written comments on water quality certification should be submitted to Mr. Phil Hegeman, Planning and Standards Section, Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, Water Quality Control Division, 4300 Cherry Creek Drive South, Denver, Colorado, 80222-1530, on or before **July 5, 2001**.

The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, Water Quality Control Division also reviews each project with respect to the anti-degradation provision in state regulations. For further information regarding anti-degradation provision, please contact Mr. Hegeman at the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, Water Quality Control Division, telephone (303) 692-3518.

The FAA as Lead Federal Agency for the proposed project has coordinated the proposed project with the Colorado Historical Society and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service concerning historical and cultural resources, and endangered or threatened species, respectively. Any requirements resulting from FAA coordination with these agencies will be incorporated into the Department of the Army permit decision.

Interested parties are invited to submit written comments on or before **July 5, 2001**. Any person may request, in writing, within the comment period specified in this notice that a public hearing be held to consider this application. Requests for public hearings shall state, with particularity, the reasons for holding a public hearing.

The decision whether to issue a permit will be based on an evaluation of the probable impact including cumulative impacts of the proposed activity on the public interest. That decision will reflect the national concern for both protection and utilization of important resources. The benefit which reasonably may be expected to accrue from the proposal must be balanced against its reasonably foreseeable detriments.

All factors which may be relevant to the proposal will be considered including the cumulative effects thereof; among those are conservation, economics, aesthetics, general environmental concerns, wetlands, cultural values, fish and wildlife values, flood hazards, flood plain values, land use, navigation, shoreline erosion and accretion, recreation, water supply and conservation, water quality, energy needs, safety, food and fiber production, mineral needs, consideration of property ownership, and in general, the needs and welfare of the people.

For activities involving 404 discharges, a permit will be denied if the discharge does not comply with the Environmental Protection Agency's Section 404(b) (1) guidelines. Subject to the preceding sentence and any other applicable guidelines or criteria, a permit will be granted unless the District Engineer determines it would be contrary to the public interest.

The Corps of Engineers is soliciting comments from the public; Federal, state, and local agencies and officials; Indian Tribes; and other interested parties in order to consider and evaluate the impacts of this proposed activity. Any comments received will be considered by the Corps of Engineers to determine whether to issue, modify, condition or deny a permit for this proposal. To make this decision, comments are used to assess impacts on endangered species, historic properties, water quality, general environmental effects, and the other public interest factors listed above. Comments are used in the preparation of an Environmental Assessment and/or an Environmental Impact Statement pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act. Comments are also used to determine the need for a public hearing and to determine the overall public interest of the proposed activity.

Written comments on this permit application should be submitted to the District Engineer at the address listed above. Please furnish a copy of your written comments to the attention of Mr. Ken Jacobson, Chief, Southwestern Colorado Regulatory Office, U.S. Army Engineer District, Sacramento, 402 Rood Avenue, Room 142, Grand Junction, Colorado 81501-2563. For further information, please contact Mr. Jacobson, at telephone number (970) 243-1199, extension 15, or email kjacobson@spk.usace.army.mil.

Michael J. Walsh
Colonel, Corps of Engineers
District Engineer

Enclosures: Drawing(s)